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# Security Council

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## Letter dated 26 May 2015 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Burundi to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to submit to you a press release by the Government of the Republic of Burundi concerning its position on the crisis currently faced by the country (see annex).

I kindly request that the present letter and its annex be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Anésie **Ndayishimiye**
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## Annex to the letter dated 26 May 2015 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Burundi to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

## Position of the Government of Burundi on the crisis currently faced by the country

The Government of Burundi appreciates the concerns of the international community and the region about the crisis in the country. The Government of Burundi notes that, even before the current crisis, Burundi had been over the past year a subject of discussion by the Security Council more often than other countries facing conflicts and humanitarian crises. The reports designed to paint the Government in a bad light have now evolved with the international media and foreign agents engineering and fanning demonstrations as well as an exodus of refugees from border areas.

The recent attempted coup played into that plot and was intended to ensure the establishment of a transitional Government in Burundi. Despite those attempts, which only history will judge, Burundi, as a responsible member of the international community, has opened its doors to all those who may honestly wish to find the truth. The Government believes that the facts on the ground would negate the reports circulated in the international media and which regrettably shape international and regional opinion.

The Government of Burundi is, however, deeply concerned about the ongoing diplomatic activity that tends to undermine and, to a large extent, disrespect the constitutional institutions of Burundi. While the Government welcomes delegations of special envoys and committees of eminent personalities to assist in finding solutions to the current crisis, it regrets that these delegations come with preconceived ideas and recommendations that are not informed by the facts on the ground. In that regard, the Government of Burundi wishes to outline its position on various aspects of the crisis that should serve as a guide and an advisory to all delegations that seek to engage on those matters.

The Government wishes to emphasize that, while it appreciates the advice of all those concerned, some matters that touch on sovereignty, constitutionality and the rule of law that governs the Republic of Burundi may not be subject to discussion. The following position should therefore serve as a guide.

### Candidacy of President Nkurunziza

The Government of Burundi wishes to emphasize that there is a need to respect the constitutional institutions of Burundi. In that regard, the Government of Burundi will not negotiate or discuss matters that tend to undermine those institutions. This is the red line that must guide those seeking to engage in discussions with the Government. President Nkurunziza has reiterated that, if elected, this will be his last term, as established in the Constitution.

### Demonstrations

The truth must be told. Those demonstrations which the Government believes to be sponsored are small in number and limited to four suburbs of Bujumbura. The

demonstrators are under instructions to create violence to elicit a violent reaction from the Government. The Government is aware of this and has exercised restraint, despite the deaths of police and military officers and injuries to many others.

**Media**

Burundi has had the most open and free media in the region, with Burundians freely airing their views on the many private radio stations. Nevertheless, with the current crisis, that freedom has been abused as the radio stations have become agents of those wishing to start an insurrection in the country. The Government is, however, working with all stakeholders to create a code of conduct to be adhered to by the media and journalists, particularly during the electoral process and in this time of crisis.

**Electoral process**

The Government of Burundi believes that it is only through the democratic process of holding elections every five years that the people of Burundi can freely choose their leaders. The voice of the silent majority not demonstrating in the streets should be heard through the ballot box.

The Government appreciates the decision of the Electoral Commission to postpone the local and legislative elections, as was requested by various stakeholders, such as political parties, independent candidates, religious confessions, the region and the international community.

**Support to the electoral process**

The Government of Burundi appreciates the support received to date from friendly Governments and international organizations for holding the elections. Nevertheless, it has a responsibility to ensure that the democratic culture of holding periodic elections in Burundi takes root and, while requesting additional support, will conduct the elections with the limited resources at its disposal.

**Refugees**

The refugees who are crossing over to neighbouring countries are Burundians. The Government of Burundi is more concerned about their welfare than anybody else. The genesis of that crisis stems from the fearful memory of what happened to them in 1993 more than from any actual violence happening now. The refugees going to Tanzania were victims of atrocities at the hands of the then Burundian army. The perpetrators of that massacre are well known. The fears and scars have not healed. The refugees going to the Democratic Republic of the Congo are recent returnees who are fearful of being targeted as being members of the Interahamwe or the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda. The recent attack on an innocent man suspected by demonstrators of belonging to the Interahamwe has led to that fear.

The refugees going to Rwanda are made to believe that the crisis in Burundi will lead to a tribal conflict and that the Interahamwe will target them. The rumours that trigger those fears are no doubt the work of foreign agents, the opposition and those from civil society that wish to create such a scenario.

**Dialogue**

The Government of Burundi is open to dialogue with Burundians, especially, as usual, within the forum of political parties, the international community and countries in the region, on the way forward to address the current crisis. Such dialogue should be held with the Government's position in mind. Already, under the auspices of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the African Union, such dialogue is ongoing. The Government, however, advises that the voice of the majority of the Burundians, who reside in rural areas, must be taken into account.

The United Nations, the East African Community, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the African Union must send fact-finding missions to the rural areas of Burundi, where the majority of Burundians live, and not base their opinion on the few demonstrators, biased members of civil society and the opposition parties whose leaders stay mainly in Bujumbura.

**Coup attempt**

The Government regrets that the coup attempt took place, leading to the deaths of some Burundians. The Government appreciates the support of the international community and the regional organizations that promptly condemned the attempted coup and called for the respect of constitutionality. The Government is committed to ensuring that the arrested coup-plotters face a fair judicial process. The Government further calls upon those on the run to surrender, as they will be treated fairly by the justice system in Burundi.

**Role of the international community and the region**

The Government requests the international community and the region to play the following role in order to address the crisis:

(a) To support an all-inclusive electoral process and urge the parties that have submitted candidates to fully participate in the elections. The Government commits itself to providing a level playing field and security to all candidates;

(b) To send fact-finding missions to the border areas from which the refugees originate to determine the actual cause of the exodus;

(c) To urge neighbouring countries to contribute positively to peace and stability in Burundi and to facilitate the return of refugees, so that they may enjoy their civil right to vote. More than 99 per cent of the territory of Burundi is indeed peaceful;

(d) To respect the constitutional institutions of Burundi and the constitutional timelines as regards the electoral process. Indeed, with regard to the presidential election calendar, the Government informs the people and the international community that the date remains unchanged. As a matter of fact, the Constitution and the Electoral Code provide that the election of the President of the Republic takes place at least one month and two months at most before the expiration of the term of the President of the Republic (art. 103 of the Constitution). It should be recalled that the swearing-in of the President of the Republic may not take place beyond 26 August 2015;

(e) To send observer missions to assess the climate and the conduct of the elections;

(f) To prevail upon those sponsoring and encouraging the demonstrations to call them off, so that the elections may take place in the four areas of Bujumbura.

Done at Bujumbura, on 22 May 2015

Office of the Spokesperson and the Secretary-General
of the Government